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Letter dated 9 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Summary of the follow-up seminar to General Assembly resolution 65/149, entitled "Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Dalius **Čekuolis**

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Summary of the follow-up seminar to General Assembly resolution 65/149, entitled "Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea" (Vilnius, 20 September 2011)

1. The International Seminar on Environmental Effects Related to Waste Originating from Sea-dumped Chemical Munitions, held in Vilnius on 20 September 2011, gathered together representatives and experts from 23 States, including European countries, the United States of America, Canada and Japan, as well as from the Helsinki Commission, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector (for more information see www.seadumpedcw.org).

2. The participants discussed environmental, safety and security challenges and effects posed by waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions in various parts of the world (the eastern and western coasts of the continental United States and near Hawaii, the eastern coast of Canada, Vieques Island of Puerto Rico, the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Italy and the Baltic Sea), as well as national and international responses to them.

3. The work by the Helsinki Commission and the OSPAR Commission was emphasized as an example of very good regional cooperation that could be used in the setting of guidelines for other regions. All participants agreed that using regional examples as a background, and namely the cases of the North-East Atlantic and the Baltic, could serve as a good example of regional cooperation, both to assess the situation and develop control and management measures.

4. It was also noted that not only regional organizations but also industries as such should become important actors in awareness-raising, both by offering more sound technical solutions for the problem, assessing impact and surveying potential effects, disclosing information on observed cases of waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions and also during the construction work by monitoring the potential impact on the marine environment in relation to performed clearing activities of waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions. Therefore, it was emphasized that a mechanism for reporting of observed cases by stakeholders other than fishermen should be developed.

5. The participants highlighted that although some remediation activity might be feasible during underwater economic activities conducted by industries, the wholesale remediation of waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions worldwide remained unlikely due to financial, political and technical constraints.

6. All participants reaffirmed the importance of General Assembly resolution 65/149, underlining the need for more coordination of relevant activities, further cooperation in sharing information on a voluntary basis and raising awareness on this subject. It was also emphasized that creating a central point for collecting information regarding waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions,

environmental aspects, long-term behaviour, potential effects (as well as technical aspects of recovery and destruction) was recommended and essential. The importance of submitting the views of Member States and relevant regional and international organizations on issues relating to the environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea, as well as on possible modalities for international cooperation to assess and increase awareness of this issue to the Secretary-General, was also underlined. Such views will be communicated to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session for further consideration.

7. The seminar proved to be an excellent opportunity for the exchange of relevant information. The importance of further intensified cooperation among States, relevant international and non-governmental organizations and the private sector with regard to waste originating from sea-dumped chemical munitions was recognized.